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Letter dated 23 February 1999 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the regional Conference on Cooperation for Development and Protection of the Coastal and Marine Environment in Sub-Saharan Africa, which was hosted by the Government of South Africa, the Advisory Committee on Protection of the Sea (ACOPS) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and held at Cape Town from 30 November to 4 December 1998. The conclusions and recommendations of this regional meeting are contained in the enclosed Cape Town Declaration.*

I would appreciate it if you would arrange for the present letter and the Declaration annexed to it to be circulated as a document of the Inter-sessional Ad Hoc Working Group of the Commission on Sustainable Development and of the seventh session of the Commission.

(*Signed*) Pieter **Vermeulen**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* Circulated in the language of submission only.

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Annex

CAPE TOWN DECLARATION ON AN AFRICAN PROCESS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION OF THE COASTAL AND MARINE ENVIRONMENT, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa

(Cape Town, 3-4 December 1998)

PREAMBLE

The Cape Town Declaration on an African process for the Development and Protection of the Coastal and Marine Environment, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, is a continuing effort, making the Maputo and Cape Town Conferences a single process, which will lead to the strengthening of the two sub-Saharan Conventions, namely Abidjan and Nairobi, through the establishment of a joint implementing mechanism and other means, a Partnership Conference, and the proposed establishment of a continent-wide CSD to integrate and co-ordinate all sustainable development issues (Agenda 21) and conventions. Within this framework,

1. The Cape Town Conference represents a specific effort to:

   (i) advance the sustainable development agenda set by African countries as strongly expressed in the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community; and

   (ii) put in place a broad-based mechanism for mobilising support for the African consensus on critical issues (as expressed in the African Common Position to the UN Conference on Environment and Development).

2. The Conference is also part of a broadly conceived effort to implement the call from the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), and the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) which was established in order to ensure effective follow-up to UNCED, to enhance international cooperation and to rationalise intergovernmental decision-making and thus facilitate the integration of environmental and developmental issues relevant to the coastal and marine environment in Africa.

3. The Conference was organised in response to the Action Strategy adopted at the ACOPS/GLOBE Conference Towards Enhanced Ocean Security into the Third Millennium (Stockholm, 31 January - 2 February 1998) which specifically asked that "urgent action should be taken to strengthen the already existing regional Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions, and to improve the coordination and implementation of existing regional programmes and action plans".

4. The Conference builds on the achievements of the Pan-African Conference on Sustainable Integrated Coastal Management (PACSICOM), held in Maputo, Mozambique (18 - 24 July 1998) which stressed its "firm resolve that the action proposals be

addressed within the existing regional conventions, intergovernmental programmes and institutional mechanisms for cooperation and coordination".

5. The specific objectives of the Cape Town Conference were identified as:

(a) to review and critically evaluate, taking into account the issues and priorities identified at the Maputo Conference and other relevant fora:

* the state of the coastal and marine environment of Africa, including the main cayses of their deterioration;

* the national policies and policy responses relevant to the development and protection of the coastal and marine environment in Africa;

* the support provided from non-national resources to address problems in the coastal and marine environment of Africa;

* the existing and evolving multilateral programmes and arrangements relevant to the development and protection of the coastal and marine environment in Africa; and

* the possible options for strengthening cooperation on development and protection of the coastal and marine environment of Africa.

(b) to formulate and adopt a strategy which may lead to the improved development and protection of coastal and marine areas, and integrating the concerns of land-locked countries of Africa and to avoid the present fragmented and poorly coordinated approach to solving their problems;

(c) to establish a joint mechanism of countries facilitating the implementation of multilateral programmes addressing issues related to the sustainable development and environmental protection of the coastal and marine areas;

(d) to lay ground for convening a "partnership conference" involving African countries and other countries with an interest in assisting African countries in achieving their developmental and environmental goals; and

(e) to further the progress achieved during 1998 as the declared International Year of the Oceans.

CAPE TOWN DECLARATION

We, the Governments represented by our ministers and senior officials responsible for the environment, meeting in Cape Town from 30 November to 2 December (Technical segment) and 3 to 4 December 1998, (Ministerial segment), as part of the process of reinforcing and renewing our common resolve to effectively protect, manage and sustainably develop Africa's marine and coastal environment, as well as representatives of participating organisation, adopted the Cape Town Declaration on an African process for the Development and Protection of the Coastal and Marine Environment.

Recognising the need for Africa to unite in action and act in unity in furthering the objectives of sustainable development,

Also recognising the importance of the coastal and marine environment as a vitally important resource for Africa's sustainable social and economic development, and well-being of its people;

Further recognising poverty, underdevelopment, and debt burden as the root causes of the identified problems and as serious threats of peace, stability, and the environment in Africa, including food and economic security.

Aware that eradication of poverty is a basic precondition for sustainable development of Africa;

Noting with concern the continuing deterioration of Africa's coastal and marine environment, and erosion of its resource-base, largely due to lack of mechanisms to provide adequate co-ordination of all planned coastal development and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources;

Noting also the need to strengthen in Africa's national policies, legislation, and policy responses relevant to the development and protection of the coastal and marine environment;

Emphasising Sustainable Integrated Coastal Management (SICOM) as the most promising approach to achieve a sustainable social and economic development balanced with the protection of the resources on which this development depends;

Aware that the use of coastal and marine resources should be intrinsically linked with the protection of these resources in order to ensure their long-term and sustainable use;

Acknowledging that, while mitigation of these problems should be primarily sought through actions at national levels, solutions to a number of problems can more easily be found through concerted joint action of African countries;

Also noting the existence of numerous global and regional agreements, arrangements and programmes relevant to the development and protection of the coastal and marine environment, as well as their goals, achievements and shortcoming;

Recognising the Abidjan and Nairobi Conventions as the most suitable regional agreements to serve as the legal frameworks for the mobilisation of regionally coordinated efforts fostering the sustainable development of coastal and marine areas of the African region;

Welcoming with appreciation all initiatives and efforts to strengthen our cooperation on the development and protection of the coastal and marine environment;

Endorsing the main conclusions and recommendations of the Pan-African Conference on Sustainable Integrated Coastal Management (PACSICOM) held in Maputo, in July 1998, including the priorities identified as requiring action, and fully recognising that the PACSICOM and Cape Town Conferences are integral parts of the same process for the sustainable management of our coastal and marine environment:

1. Affirm our commitment to:

   * strengthen cooperation through the relevant existing global and regional agreements, programmes and institutional mechanisms, in particular through the coordinating framework of the Abidjan and Nairobi Conventions;

   * update the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions, and their associated action plans and protocols, taking into account the recommendations adopted by the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the Maputo Conference and the present Conference in Cape Town;

2. Decide to:

   * undertake, as envisaged in the Maputo Delcaration adopted by the PACSICOM, the necessary measures for the convening of a Partnership Conference in the year 2000, to which will be submitted action proposals in the form of projects or programme briefs developed on the basis of the outcome of both the PACSICOM and Cape Town Conferences;

   * establish a Preparatory Committee to organise the Partnership Conference in close consultation with African countries, donor governments, regional and international financial institutions, UN, bilateral and multilateral agencies, Global Environment Facility, the private sector, NGOs and other major groups;

3. Request:

* The South African government to chair the Preparatory Committee;

* The South African and Mozambique governments to ask the Advisory Committee on the Protection of the Sea (ACOPS) to extend its full support to the Partnership Conference, particularly in spearheading consultations with donor governments and institutions;

* the international community to lend effective bilateral and multilateral support to the implementation of the decisions taken at the Maputo and the Cape Town Conferences;

4. Also request:

* the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to consult with relevant African institutions on the need for the rationalisation and harmonisation of the numerous regional programmes and institutional mechanisms. In this regard, consideration should be given to ways of achieving this goal, including the possibility of the establishment of a regional Commission of Sustainable Development.

5. Also decide to submit, inter alia, this Declaration and the resolutions adopted by the Conference to:

* the governments of African countries;

* the Euro-African Summit planned to be held in the first part of the year 2000;

* donor communities;

* the next summit of the OAU (June 1999);

* the Governing Council of UNEP (February 1999);

* the next session of AMCEN (1999);

* the meetings of Contracting Parties to the Abidjan, Nairobi, Jeddah and Barcelona Conventions;

* the seventh session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (April 1999);

* the General Conference of UNESCO (November 1999); and

* the second London Oceans Workshop (1998).

PRIORITIES FOR ACTIONS

The Conference,

Recognising that the coastal and marine environment is among the most essential resource for sustainable long-term social and economic development of Africa,

Recommends the following concrete and sustained actions to follow the process which started at PACSICOM and continued at the present Conference.

1. To hold a "partnership conference" organised by African countries, donor communities, private sector, non-governmental organisations, and other partners in the year 2000 for the purpose of promoting the implementation of the African Agenda for the development and protection of the coastal and marine environment

2. To establish a Preparatory Committee, which will report to the OAU, under the chairmanship of South Africa, composed of :

   South Africa
   Mozambique
   2 members to be determined by the Bureau of the Nairobi Convention
   2 members to be determined by the Bureau of the Abidjan Convention
   UNEP
   AMCEN
   UNESCO

   ACOPS will be the facilitator of this Preparatory Committee.

   The Preparatory Committee will report through its chairman to the OAU which will facilitate consultations with all other stakeholders.

   With regard to the decision on the venue of the Partnership Conference the Preparatory Committee should take into consideration offers already made by various countries, including Côte d'Ivoire.

   This Preparatory Committee will, inter alia:

   a) Consider at a first meeting to be held at the beginning of 1999, the following aspects:

   * Development of terms of reference for the Preparatory Committee;
   * Definition of a work plan with timetables;
   * Definition of a process for the establishment of national

focal points to co-ordinate and participate in the necessary activities for the preparation of the Partnership Conference; and

* Development of a consultative process with potential partners, including the private sector, non-governmental organisations, and others.

b) Develop a proposal, within the framework of sustainable development, containing prioritised list of actions for Africa :

(i) to prepare an analysis of the economic, social, and cultural root causes of already identified problems hindering the development and protection of the coastal and marine areas and resources of Africa;

(ii) to identify areas of environmental degradation of regional significance which would require to be addressed as regional priorities;

(iii) to prepare pre-investment studies for such areas, once they are determined;

(iv) to develop proposals for regional projects or national projects of regional significance, including existing or on-going projects (e.g. demonstration projects or projects dealing with transboundary effects and with Large Marine Ecosystems, as appropriate); and

(v) to incorporate into existing national or sub-regional action plans, elements regarding the development and protection of the coastal and marine environment, and if necessary, to develop such plans;

(vi) to investigate the possibility of a viable financial model to ensure sustainable financing of the African Process; and

(vii) to identify areas of duplication of efforts and to seek to avoid or rationalise these situations.

3. Urges UNEP, ACOPS and other partners to assist in facilitation and seeking of investments and funds to enable the Preparatory Committee to take the process forward, complementing the national, sub-regional and regional resources with regard to the projects proposed.

4. Calls upon UNEP, as the secretariat of the Abidjan and Nairobi Conventions, to develop, in close consultation with the relevant governing bodies of these Conventions, a concrete action plan for revitalisation and co-ordination of the Conventions, through the establishment of a joint implementation mechanism.

5. Requests the government of South Africa to take forward to the OAU a request to consult with relevant regional institutions including AMCEN, ECA and ADB, and global organisations such as UNEP, on modalities or arrangements which would help in the efforts to rationalise intergovernmental programmes and institutions in this region. The feasibility of achieving this goal through the establishment of a regional Commission on Sustainable Development should be part of the consultations.

6. Urges all major groups, as identified in Agenda 21, to actively participate in relevant activities, and support the aforementioned priorities, and in particular to ensure the provision of relevant research and training, and whenever possible, transfer of technology.

7. Call upon all States in Africa to consult, mobilise and involve their local communities, private sector, local and sub-national authorities, as well as their intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations in the planning and decision-making process.